

Jim Doyle
Governor

Roberta Gassman
Secretary



State of Wisconsin

Department of Workforce Development

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Secretary Gassman Presents \$77,857 Grant to Help Kenosha County Fund Respite Care to Children at Risk of Abuse, Neglect

KENOSHA – Department of Workforce Development Secretary (DWD) Roberta Gassman today presented the Kenosha County Division of Children and Family Services a Community Child Care Initiatives Grant for \$77,857 to help fund respite care to children at risk of abuse or neglect.

With state and local funding, Kenosha County provides respite care to nearly 120 children a year. Children with special needs are referred to the division by the Birth to 3 Program, Early Head Start, or Families First, the county's wraparound project for families with children who are severely emotionally disturbed.

Division Director John Jansen said a parent, for example, may need temporary care for a child while the parent keeps a doctor's appointment. Respite care is provided either at a certified or licensed child care provider in the community, or A Child's Place, the center in the county Human Service Building and Job Center.

A Child's Place also provides care to children of W-2 participants, who come to the Job Center, and children of the more than 400 employees in the Human Service Building. According to Jansen, the state and locally funded respite care program also helps area providers improve child care through program assessment and training advice.

On behalf of Governor Jim Doyle, Secretary Gassman awarded the grant at A Child's Place and thanked Jansen, his staff, and local partners for the service they provide. She said their efforts show what can be achieved elsewhere under the Governor's *KidsFirst* Initiative. Earlier this year, Governor Doyle proposed the comprehensive plan to improve the lives of children and see that they receive quality child care at a very early age.

"Providing infants and toddlers quality child care and early education will pay huge dividends," Secretary Gassman said, adding that research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison shows \$7 to \$8 in long-term savings on every child care dollar.

"This is money that would otherwise be spent to fight crime and address other problems rooted in failure and opportunities lost early in the lives of our children," Secretary Gassman said. "Far more important than any money saved is the success our children will enjoy, as they grow and become contributing members of society. That is why Governor Doyle proposed his *KidsFirst* Initiative earlier this year."

Senator Bob Wirth of Kenosha joined Secretary Gassman in awarding the grant.

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